



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

“ ‘ Well, I say, — Wyndham ! ’ he muttered, ‘ if *this* is Mrs. Digby’s *ho-long* — ! ’

“ The circle dispersed and Claude released his prisoner. It was not long before he observed him planted in a corner, with his back held resolutely against the wall, standing as straight as a grenadier under review, occasionally making a wry face at the pressure of his new boots, and now and then applying his handkerchief to his temples.” — Vol. I. pp. 107 – 112.

The work shows a deep sympathy with human nature, as well as a familiar acquaintance with the higher forms of European social life. The author has not been dazzled by the trappings of royalty and aristocracy, though he can describe them all so well. The virtues and the vices of high society are set forth by him with impartiality and force ; and we rise from his pages with a cordial respect for his abilities, a sympathy with his views of life, and an admiration of the moral purity which is shed over the scenes he has so vividly placed before us.

ART. IX. — *The Rural Life of England* ; by WILLIAM HOWITT, Author of the “ *Book of the Seasons*,” &c. In Two Volumes. London. 1838. 12mo.

THESE two volumes are among the most attractive and entertaining that have appeared lately from the British press. To Americans the subject can never be destitute of interest. We have too many common feelings with the English, too much pride in our common ancestry and our common literature, too much veneration for the land of our forefathers, ever to be indifferent to the welfare of those who speak the same language, and who uphold the same principles of liberty with ourselves. We may have a family quarrel now and then, in which sundry hearty cuffs will be exchanged ; foolish tourists may and will provoke an angry feeling from time to time, by some profound disquisition on silver forks, and the different modes of eating eggs ; serious questions may, from time to time, be presented, requiring mutual for-

bearance and confidence to adjust ; but the exercise of those sentiments may now be looked for ; the great national heart is sound, and beats to the voice of national friendship. The accomplished minds of both countries are constantly interchanging visits, and ripening the indefinite attachment springing from similarity of lineage, into the warmer sentiment of personal regard. We are no longer left to judge of the English character by the Fauxes, the Fearons, the Trollopes, or the Halls ; but the gentlemen of England are not unfrequently seen among us, and the writings of such men as Murray are taken as an authentic report of the condition and character of the United States. American travellers in England have ceased to be chiefly the representatives of the money-making classes, — persons unfit by education or the habits of their daily life to appear to advantage in the polished circles of European society ; but distinguished professional men, illustrious statesmen, writers whose fame has transcended the limits of provincial popularity, have made themselves felt among the foremost minds in the British Empire, and have been received with open arms and splendid hospitality. Surely a better period of international intercourse is already commenced ; a more thorough mutual appreciation, and a higher mutual respect, have begun to mark the tone of manners between the two nations ; and the chances of future hostile collision between the two great branches of the kindred race are rapidly diminishing every day. Humanity, letters, and religion will feel the blessed effects of this new and beneficial order of things.

In a period of this general good will, a book like Mr. Howitt's is particularly well timed, and has been accordingly very well received among those of us who have had an opportunity of reading its agreeable pages. Mr. Howitt writes in a style of much beauty, but free from all elaborate stateliness. It is polished, and correct, and copious, but at the same time sounds like the conversation of an accomplished man, describing the peculiarities of manners, the sports and pastimes, the labors and enjoyments, of his own countrymen. The work shows a minute personal acquaintance with every subject on which it touches ; Mr. Howitt delineates, with the lively distinctness which none but the eyewitness can exhibit. A tone of genial fellow feeling with the pleasures and amusements of the English people runs through the book, and

strikes pleasantly upon the imagination of the reader ; and we feel, while lingering over his pages, that we are in the presence of a cordial and sympathizing friend. An air of truth reigns throughout the book, which commands our confidence and respect ; and a vein of enlightened humanity is perceived there, which wins at once our affection.

This work is not, however, to be regarded simply as a book of entertainment. It has other and higher uses. It is an excellent interpreter of many portions of English literature, — that noble inheritance to which, thank God, we Americans are born. In an ancient country like England, the habits of the people assume a permanent form ; century after century rolls away, and opinions, superstitions, observances, national feelings, are scarcely touched by the hand of time. All these are the choicest materials of the poet and the writer of fiction ; by incorporating them into his works, by embellishing them with the ornament of his genius, he reaches the national heart, and lives in the affectionate remembrance of generation after generation of his countrymen. To men of a different nation all these hues of nationality, which constitute some of the highest beauties of national literature, become faint and dim, and can only be brought out by careful and laborious study ; as we come to perceive the exquisite character of the great poetical works of antiquity only by a minute investigation of the national manners, arts, social usages, and mythologies, under whose influences they were produced. But, though we do not stand to English literature in the relation of foreigners, there can be no doubt that we require not a little of this sort of commentary, if we would fully appreciate the power of the English muse. We speak, it is true, the English language, and we have in general the same Anglo-Saxon cast of thought, and intellectual peculiarities, with our English brethren ; still we have been so long politically independent, we are, comparatively speaking, so young a people, and we have had so little time to settle down into a fixed national character, in the midst of the pressing cares of life, with which the youth of a nation, like the youth of a man, is so closely besieged, that many of the habits, usages, and ceremonies, whether religious or social, to which our ancestors were accustomed under the roof of the old homestead, have faded from memory, and vanished from the theatre of popular life. The most national of the English poets, there-

fore, appeal to feelings, which among us are nothing but feeble traditions ; and draw illustrations of thrilling power over those to whom they are more immediately addressed, from sources to which we have long ceased to resort, if we have not utterly forgotten them. How delightful, then, to find a record drawn up in so pleasing a form, of those ancient customs, which have formed the character of the English nation during so many centuries ! of those sports and festivals, to which our mother country is indebted for the renowned name of "Merry England"! What an agreeable light is shed by such a work over many of the rarest beauties of British poetry ; and how useful the guidance, thus indirectly afforded to the American reader, who roams delighted over a field so familiar and yet so strange, so suggestive of the deepest home feelings, and yet occasionally so obscure, as the elder literature of England !

In England itself, such a work cannot fail to be useful, for even England is undergoing rapid changes amidst the irresistible influence of the new era. The time is swiftly coming when she will no longer be the England she was ; when absorbing realities, the overwhelming interests of the present, the gigantic progress of science and art, and the growing political power of the masses, will substitute, for the old amusements, the earnest inquiries, the vast hopes, the energetic activity of a nation with awakened aspirations, struggling after that something measureless and infinite, which it is supposed the future will reveal. Then the picturesque customs, which still linger in many parts of England, will vanish into the hazy distance of the past ; they will exist in poetry, but only to arouse a faint and feeble echo, except in the breast of him whose peculiar taste leads him to grope in the dark passages of antiquity, rather than walk out upon the dusty highway, and under the glaring noonday light of the present. Then Mr. Howitt's book will have the value of a contemporary sketch of scenes and institutions, drawn from the life. What would we not give for such a book, written by an Englishman of the age of Shakspeare ! How precious would be every piece of information, which might shed a ray of light upon a misunderstood allusion, an obscure expression, a disputed adage, of the great poet of the world ! How many corruptions of the text, wrought by the rash hands of the commentators, would have been prevented ; how much labor of

explanation would have been spared ; how many uncertainties, now never to be cleared up, would have been prevented ! The invaluable edition of Shakspeare, by Mr. Knight, now publishing, shows the importance of this kind of illustration, both by the success with which it has been applied so far as possible, and by the number of instances where such illustrations would obviously be applicable, were they to be had. But it is time to give a more particular account of the work before us.

The work consists, as we have already remarked, of two beautiful volumes, exquisitely embellished with prints, drawn and engraved by Williams. The author has aimed “to present to the reader a view of the Rural Life of England at the present period, as seen in all classes and in all parts of the country.” He says, “For this purpose I have not merely depended upon my acquaintance with rural life, which has been that of a great portion of my own life from boyhood, but I have literally travelled, and a great deal of it on foot, from the Land’s End to the Tweed, penetrating into the retirements, and witnessing the domestic life of the country in primitive seclusion and under rustic roofs. If the mountains and valleys, the fair plains and sea-coasts, the halls and farm-houses, the granges, and cottages of shepherds, miners, peasants, or fishermen, be visited in these volumes with a tenth part of the enjoyment with which I have visited them in the reality, they must be delightful books indeed ; for no moments of my existence have been more deliciously spent, than those in which I have wandered from spot to spot of this happy and beautiful island, surveying its ancient monuments, and its present living men and manners.”

The first chapter is so eloquent and beautiful, that we hardly know where to limit our extracts. The following paragraphs make a part of it.

“Let every man who has a sufficiency for the enjoyment of life, thank Heaven most fervently that he lives in this country and age. They may tell us of the beauty of southern skies, and the softness of southern climates ; but where is the land which a man would rather choose to call himself a native of, — because it combines more of the requisites for a happy and useful existence ; more of the moral, social, and intellectual advantages, without which fair skies or soft cli-

mates would become dolorous, or at best, indifferent ? I say, let every man gratefully rejoice, who has the means of commanding the full blessings of English life, — for alas ! there are thousands and millions of our countrymen who possess but a scanty portion of these ; whose lives are too long and continuous a course of toil and anxiety to permit them even to look round them and see how vast are the powers of enjoyment in this country, and how few of those sources of ease, comfort, and refined pleasure are within their reach. I trust a better day is coming to this portion of our population ; that many circumstances are working together to confer on the toiling children of these kingdoms the social rewards which their unwearied industry so richly merits ; but for those who already hold in their hands the golden key, where is the country like England ? If we are naturally proud of making portion of a mighty and a glorious kingdom, where is the kingdom like England ? It is a land of which the most ambitious or magnanimous spirit may well say with a high emotion, — ‘That is my country !’ Over what an extent of the earth it stretches its territories ; over what swarming and diversified millions it extends its sceptre ! On every side of the globe, lie its outspread regions ; under every aspect of heaven, walk its free or tributary people. In the West Indies ; in the vaster dominions of the East ; in America and Australia ; through each wide continent, and many a fair island ! But its political and moral power extends even far beyond these. What nation is there, however great, that does not look with breathless anxiety to the movements of England ; what country is not bound up with it in the strongest interests and hopes ; what country is there which does not feel the influence of its moral energy ? Through all the cities and forests of Republican America, the spirit of England, as well as its language, lives and glows. France, Germany, and even Russia to the depths of its frozen heart, feel the emanations of its free and popular institutions. Every pulse of love which beats here, — every principle of justice that is more clearly recognised, — every sentiment of Christianity that is elevated on the broad basis of the human heart, hence spreads through the earth as from a centre of moral life, and produces in the remotest regions its portion of civilization.

“ ‘Hence do I love my country ! — and partake
Of kindred agitations for her sake ;
She visits oftentimes my midnight dream ;
Her glory meets me with the earliest beam
Of light, which tells that morning is awake.’

“It is something to make a part, however small, of such a nation. It is something to feel that you have such a scope of power and beneficence in the earth. But, when you add to this the food laid up for the heart and the intellect in this island, — the wealth of literature and science ; the spirit of freedom in which they are nourished, and by which they are prosecuted ; the sound religious feeling which has always distinguished it as a nation ; the philanthropic institutions that exist in it, — every true heart must felicitate itself that its lot is cast in this kingdom.

“Such are the moral, political, and intellectual advantages of English life, which must make any noble-minded and reflecting man feel, as he considers his position in the scale of humanity, that he is ‘a citizen of no mean city’ ; but our social advantages are not a whit behind these. Can any state of society be well conceived on which the arts and sciences, literature, and general knowledge, can shed more social conveniences and refined enjoyments ? In our houses, in our furniture, in all the materials for our dresses, in the apparatus for our tables and the endless variety of good things by which they are supplied, for which every region has been traversed, and every art in bringing them home, or raising them at home, has been exerted ; in books and paintings ; in the wonderful provision and accumulation of every article in our shops, that the real wants or the most fanciful desires of men or women may seek for ; in our gardens, roads, the beautiful and affluent cultivation of the country, — what nation is there, or has there been, which can for a moment bear a comparison with England ?

“ ‘Ye miserable ancients, had ye these ?’

“And this we may ask, not merely as it respects gas, steam, the marvellous developements of chemistry and electro-magnetism, by which the mode and embellishment of our existence have been so much changed already, and which promise yet changes too vast to be readily familiarized to the imagination, — but of a thousand other privileges and conveniences in which England is preëminent. It is, however, to our rural life that we are about to devote our attention ; and it is in rural life that the superiority of England is, perhaps, more striking, than in any other respect. Over the whole face of our country the charm of a refined existence is diffused. There is nothing which strikes foreigners so much as the beauty of our country abodes, and the peculiarity of our country life. The elegancies, the arts

and refinements of the city are carried out and blended, from end to end of the island, so beautifully with the peaceful simplicity of the country, that nothing excites more the admiration of strangers than those rural paradises, the halls, castles, abbeys, lodges, and cottages, in which our nobility and gentry spend more or less of every year. Let Prince Pückler Muskaw, Washington Irving, Willis, Count Pecchio, Rice, and others, tell you how beautiful, in their eyes, appeared the parks, lawns, fields, and the whole country of England, cultivated like a garden. It is true, that our climate is not to be boasted of for its perpetual serenity. It has had no lack of abuse, both from our own countrymen and others. We are none of us without a pretty lively memory of its freaks and changes, its mists and tempests ; its winters wild as the last, and its springs that are often so late in their arrival, that they find summer standing in the gate to tell them they are no longer wanted. All this we know ; yet which of us is not ready to forgive all this, and to say with a full heart,

“ ‘ England, with all thy faults, I love thee still ! ’

“ Which of us is not grateful and discerning enough to remember, that even our fickle and imperfect climate has qualities to which England owes much of its glory, and we, many a proud feeling and victorious energy ? Which of us can forget, that this abused climate is that which has not enervated by its heats, has not seduced by its amenities, has not depopulated by its *malaria*, so that under its baneful influence we have become feeble, listless, reckless of honor or virtue ; the mean, the slothful, the crouching slaves of barbarians, or even effeminate despots : it is that which has done none of these things ; produced no such effects as these ; but it is that which has raised millions of frames strong and muscular and combatant, and enduring as the oaks of its rocky hills ; that has nerved those frames to the contempt alike of danger and effeminacy ; and has quickened them with hearts full of godlike aspirations after a virtuous glory. What a long line, — what ages after ages, of invincible heroes, of dauntless martyrs for freedom and religion, of solemn sages and lawgivers, of philosophers and poets, men sober, and prescient, and splendid in all their endowments as any country ever produced ; — what a line of these has flourished amid the glooms and severities of this abused climate ; and, while Italy has sunk into subjection, and Greece has lain waste beneath the feet of the Turk, —

has piled up by a succession of matchless endeavours the fame and power of England, to the height of its present greatness.

“ ‘ In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible knights of old :
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakspeare spake ; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held. In every thing we are sprung
Of earth's best blood, have titles manifold.’

“ And will any man tell me that the spirit of our climate has had nothing to do with begetting and nourishing the energy which has borne on to immortality these great men ; which has quickened us with ‘ earth's best blood ’ ; which has given us ‘ titles manifold ’ ? The gloom and desolate majesty of autumn, — the wild magnificence of thunder-storms, with their vivid lightnings, their awful uproar, the lurid darkness of their clouds, and the outshining of rainbows, — have these had no effect on the meditations of divines and the songs of poets ? Has the soul-concentrating power of winter driven our writers into their closets in vain ? Have the fireside festivities of our darkest season ; has the blazing yule-clog, and the merriment of the old English hall, — things which have grown out of the very asperity of the climate, left no traces in our literature ? Did Milton, Bacon, Spenser, Shakspeare, and such spirits, walk through our solemn halls, whether of learning, or religion, or baronial pomp, all of which have been raised by the very genius of a pensive climate ; or did they climb our mountains, and roam our forests, amid winds that roared in the boughs and whirled their leaves at their feet, and gather thence no imagery, no similes, no vigor of thought and language, such as still skies and flowery meadows could not originate ? Let us turn to the lays and romances of Scott and Byron, and see whether brown heaths and splintered mountains ; the savage ruins of craggy coasts, moaning billows, mists, and rains ; the thunder of cataracts, and the sleep of glens, all seen and felt under the alternations of seasons and of weather, such only as an unsettled climate could show, have not tinged their spirits, and therefore their works, with hues of an immortal beauty, the splendid product of a boisterous climate. Why they are these influences, which have had no small share in the creation of such men as Burns, Bloomfield, Hogg, and Clare, — the shepherd-poets of a free land, and an out-of-door life. Yes, we are indebted to our climate for a mass of good, a host of advantages of which we little dream, till we begin to count them up.

“And are all our experiences of the English climate those of gloom? Are there no glorious sunsets, no summer evenings, balmy as our dreams of heaven, no long sunny days of summer, no dewy mornings, whose freshness brings with it ideas of earth in its youth, and the glades of Paradise trod by the fair feet of Eve? Have we no sweet memories of youth and friendship, in which such hours, such days, in which fields of harvest, hay-harvest and corn-harvest, with all their rejoicing rustic companies, lie in the sunshine? Are there none of excursions through the mountains, along sea-shores, of sailing on fair lakes, or lying by running waters in green and flowery dales, while over head shone out skies so blue and serene that they seemed as though they could never change? In every English bosom there lie many such sweet memories; and if we look through the whole of one of the worst seasons that we have, what intervals of pleasant weather we find in it. One of the great charms of this country too, dependent on its climate, is that rich and almost perpetual greenness, of which strangers always speak with admiration.”—Vol. 1. pp. 1–8.

The subsequent chapters of Part First of Volume First treat, in detail, the English country gentleman; the life of the gentry in the country; the annual visit of the aristocracy to the town; country sports; farming; planting; gardening; country excitements. Part Second discusses and describes, at great length, the condition and character of the agricultural population. Part Third takes up the picturesque and moral features of the country. Here we have a most interesting chapter on the Gipsies; another describing the retired nooks of England; another on English houses; and these are followed by fine descriptions of several country seats, particularly of Annesley Hall and Newstead Abbey. Annesley Hall, it will be remembered, was the residence of the beautiful and ill-fated Mary Chaworth, the object of Byron's earliest and most passionate attachment. The interest of the following passage to all the lovers of poetry must excuse its length. We have read it again and again with the profoundest feeling.

“We now resolved to ascertain at the house itself, if it had any living inhabitants; and, on approaching the hall-door, we heard a sound in a stable; we went in, and descried, in a dismal room adjoining it, a man sitting by a fire in a corner, and a dog lying on the hearth. The man and the place were alike forlorn. They were dirty, squalid, deso-

late. We had said, Who could have supposed so abandoned a spot so near Nottingham ? but who could have imagined so wild and banditti-like a being, as that man within so short a distance of a large town ? His dress and person had every character of reckless neglect ; his black hair hung about his pale face ; he had no handkerchief about his neck ; he sate and devoured his dinner, which he appeared to have cooked with his own hands, looking up at us with a ruffian stupidity, as he answered our questions with a surly bluntness, without ceasing to help himself, with a large pocket-knife, and no fork, to his meal. He told us we could not see the house, — master never let it be seen. When asked, Why ? he could not tell, — but it was so ; but we might ask the old woman in the house. Away we went, and a jewel of an old woman we found.

“ She was the very *beau idéal* of an old servant ; all simplicity, fidelity, full of the history of the family ; wrapped up in its fortunes and its honors, — a part and parcel of the race and place, for she had been in the family above sixty years, — being taken, as she said, when she was ten years old, by Mary Chaworth’s grandfather, and put to school, and taught to read and write, to mark and to flower ; for she would, he said, be a nice sharp girl to wait on him. ‘ Oh ! he was a pretty man, — a very pretty, well-behaved gentleman,’ said she with a sigh. Old Nanny Marsland, for such was her name, seemed a pure and unsophisticated creature ; the regular influx of visitors had not spoiled her ; the curious and the pert, and the idle, the insolent and the foolish, had not troubled the clear sincere current of her thoughts ; had not made her heart and spirit turn inward, in self-defence, and converted her into the subtle and parrot show-woman.

“ She never dreamt of any thing being blamable that had been done by any of *the family*. She delighted to talk of the Hall and its people ; and feeling her solitude, — for she was the sole regular occupant, — some one to talk to was a luxury. Could we have hoped for a creature more to our hearts’ desire ? Under her guidance we progressed through this most interesting old place ; thoughts and feelings, never to be forgotten, springing up at every step.

“ The house is not large ; and desertion had stamped within the same characters as on all without. Damp had disfigured the walls ; a fire of cheerful pine-logs blazed in the hall and in the kitchen ; but everywhere else was the chill and gloom of the old neglected mansion. All the more modern furniture, and most of the paintings, had been removed,

and thereby the keeping of the abode was but the better preserved. We know not how to describe the feelings with which we traversed these rooms. It was as if the hall of one of our old English families had been hidden beneath a magic cloud for ages, and suddenly revealed to our eyes, now, at a time when every thing belonging to this country is so much changed ; — houses, men, manners, and opinions. When we entered the old-fashioned family hall, standing as it stood ages ago, furnished as it was ages ago, with its antique stove, its antique sofas, if so they can be called, made of wood carved, and curiously painted, and cushioned with scarlet, standing on each side of the fire ; the antique French timepiece on its bracket ; its various old cabinets and tables standing by walls ; and its floor of large and small squares of alternating black marble and white stone, — the domestic sanctuary of a race whom we regard as our progenitors, but widely different from ourselves, seemed suddenly revealed to us, and we could almost have expected to see the rough, boisterous squire, or the stately baron, issue from one of the side-doors ; or to hear the rustling of the silken robe of some long-waisted dame, who could occasionally leap a five-barred gate as readily as she could dance at the Christmas festival ; or one of high and solemn beauty, in whom devotion deep, uninquiring and undoubting, was the great principle and passion of life ; to whom the domestic chapel was a holy place ; the chaplain her daily counsellor ; and the distribution of alms her daily occupation. We saw before us the hearthstone of a race that lived in the full enjoyment of aristocratic ascendancy, when rank was old and undisputed ; when neither mercantile wealth had pressed on their nobility on the one hand, nor popular knowledge and rights on the other ; when the gentry lived only to be revered and obeyed, every one in the midst of his own forests and domains as a king, and led forth his tenants and serfs to the wars of his country, or to the chase of his own wide wilds ; when field sports, and jovial feastings, and love-making, were the life-employment of men and women, who took rank and power as an unquestioned heritage, and never troubled their brain with gathering knowledge ; and all below them were supposed to be happy, because they were ignorant and submissive.

“ This hall which occupies the centre of the building, is nearly sixty feet long by thirty wide, supported by two elliptic arches and Ionic pillars. The middle of the room is now occupied by a billiard table, which formerly stood in an upper

room, called the terrace-room, of which we shall speak presently. At the lower end of this hall an easy flight of steps leads to the upper apartments. Near the fire, at the upper end, a few steps lead into a beautiful little breakfast-room, which looks out into the garden, and forms one of the projections of the building, the staircase at the lower end forming the other : the three large, old-fashioned windows which light the hall, lying on this side, and looking out into a little parterre, fenced off with a trellis-fence, even with the two projections we have spoken of,—such a parterre as one often meets with, belonging to old houses,—a little favored sanctuary of garden-ground, where choice flowers were trained, and which was the especial care of page and gardener, before ladies took to gardening themselves. This, which is now a perfect wilderness, almost overrun with shrubs and the tall tree-like laurels which encumber wall and window, and almost exclude daylight from the hall, to the great annoyance of our good old woman, was once, as was fitting, the favorite flower-garden of Mary Chaworth.

“The little breakfast room we mentioned, looks out not only by a side window into the parterre, but also by two large, low windows into the garden ; a fine old garden, with a fine stately old terrace, one of the noblest it was ever our good fortune to see, and such a one as Danby or Turner would be proud to enrich their fine pictures with. In this room were a few family portraits. One, a small, full-length figure, which the old woman very significantly told us was Byron's Chaworth ; that is, the Chaworth killed by the poet's grandfather in a duel. Another portrait she informed us was the last Lord Chaworth ; for this estate, which had been in the family of the Annesleys from the time of the Conquest, came into that of Lord Viscount Chaworth of Armagh, in Ireland, by the marriage of one of his ancestors with the sole heiress, Alice de Annesley, in the reign of Henry VI. ‘And this,’ she said, pointing to a female portrait, ‘was his lawful wife.’ ‘What then,’ we said, ‘there was an unlawful wife, was there?’ ‘Yes,’ she added, ‘she is here.’ We glanced at the picture placed in the shady corner by the window, next, however, to Lord Chaworth, and exclaimed, ‘And a good judge was his Lordship too!’ A creature of most perfect and wondrous beauty it was that we beheld. What a fine, rich, oval countenance, and noble forehead slightly shaded by auburn locks ! what large dark eyes of inexpressible expression ! what a soft, delicate, yet beautiful and sunny complexion ! what a beautiful rounding

of the cheek, chin, and throat ! what exquisite features ! what a perfect mixture of nobility of mind, with elegance and simplicity of taste. Never did we behold a more enchanting vision of youth and beauty ; and all this hidden for generations in a dark nook of this old hall, unmentioned, and unknown. It were worth a journey from London but to gaze upon. Beautiful as this portrait is, it represents a mole upon either cheek ; but this, instead of detracting from the loveliness of the face, as might be imagined, only appears to give it character and individuality, and vouches for the fidelity of the likeness. The painting, too, is extremely well done ; far superior to any thing else in the house, except it be the satin petticoat of a Miss Burdett in the terrace-room. ‘ And who,’ we inquired, ‘ was this charming creature ? ’ ‘ She was a girl of the village, sir,’ was the reply. ‘ What ! could the village produce a creature like her ? ’ ‘ Yes : his Lordship took her into the house as a servant ; but she did not like him, and went away ; however, he got her afterwards, and built a house for her on the estate, and she had one child. But she died, poor thing ! all was not right somehow ; and all her money she put in a cupboard for her son, — they would show you the cupboard in the house to this day ; and on the very night she died, her own relations came and took away the money ; — things weren’t as they should have been, poor thing ! and she came again.’ ‘ What, was this the lady that we have heard an old man say, came up out of a well, and sat in a tree by moonlight, combing her hair ? ’ ‘ No, Lord bless you ! that was another ; but the parson *laid* her, and the well is covered in ; but for all that she walks yet ! ’ We smiled at the good woman’s very orthodox belief in ghosts ; but we know not whether we should not be apt to catch the contagion of superstitious feeling, if we were to dwell all alone in this old house as she does, and hear the winds howling and sighing about it at night ; the long ivy rustling about the windows, and dashing against the panes ; and the owls hooting about in many a wild, piercing, and melancholy tone ; and feel one’s self in the unparticipated solitude of those ancient rooms, with all their strange and sad memories.

“ Besides this portrait of the beautiful and unhappy Mrs. Milner, we bestowed a look of great interest on one of much attraction, the daughter of Viscount Chaworth, — not beautiful, but full of the fascination of cultivated mind, and of a heart so living and loving, that it caused the eyelids to droop over their beamy orbs, with an expression that made you

tremble for the peace of its possessor. One other picture attracted our attention from its singularity. It represents a landscape, apparently, 'the hill of green and mild declivity,' the line of trees, and the trees in circular array, from among which rises the temple we spoke of before, and which our cicerone assured us had been considered 'the finest in all England, but had been blown down in Oliver Cromwell's days.' In the foreground stands, as if painted in enamel, a gentleman in a strange sort of dress-jerkin, of white satin, with a short petticoat of purple velvet bordered with gold lace. On his right hand his Amazonian lady, half the head taller than himself, clad in a riding-dress of green, bordered likewise with gold-lace; and on either side of them a son, in the full-dress of William and Mary's reign; with powdered wigs, long-lapped scarlet coats, waistcoats, and breeches, with white silk stockings on their neat little legs, and lace ruffles at their hands, each with his little head turned on one side; — the one caressing a fawn, the other a greyhound; and the family group completed by the groom standing a little behind, holding the lady's palfrey ready saddled for her use. These, and a portrait of the son of Lord Chaworth, are all the family pictures which the house contains.

"Leaving then this room, we re-crossed the hall, and ascending the staircase at the lower end, entered the drawing-room, which is over the hall, — a handsome room, and the best furnished in the house. The most interesting piece of furniture it contains, or perhaps, which the house itself contains, is a screen covered over with a great number of cuttings in black paper, done by a Mrs. Goodchild, and representing a great variety of family incidents and character, — those little passing incidents in life, which, though rarely chronicled, are most influential on its fortunes, — on which often its very destiny hangs. The receipt of a letter, — the first meeting, — the last parting, — how much do these things involve! Here we were introduced to Mary Chaworth, the lovely and graceful maiden, full of hope, and life, and gayety; with her friends and dependents about her; at the very time when Lord Byron became attached to her. Of the accuracy of this likeness we have no doubt, from the wonderful fidelity of some of the others, with whose persons we are acquainted.

"In one place she is represented as sitting in a room, her attitude one of terror. A man is before her presenting a pistol, and a little terrified page is concealing himself under a table. In another she sits with her mother and a gentle-

man at tea ; a footman behind waiting upon them. Again, she is in the gardens or grounds, walking with her cousin, Miss Radford ; her rustic hat thrown back upon her shoulders ; her beautiful head turned aside ; and her hand put forth to receive a letter from a page, kneeling on one knee, — a letter from her lover and subsequent husband.

“ Again, she is playing with a little child ; and in all, her figure is full of exquisite grace and vivacity, and the profile of the face remarkably fine. It is impossible to say with what intense interest we examined these memorials of private life ; these passages so full of vitality and character, incidental, but important, — the very essence of an autobiography.

“ From the drawing-room we passed to the one called the terrace-room, from its opening by a glass door upon the terrace, which runs along the top of the garden at right angles with the house, and level with this second story, descending to the garden by a double flight of broad stone steps, in the middle of its length, which is about eighty yards. This room formerly contained the billiard table, and in it Mary Chaworth and her noble lover passed much time. He was fond of the terrace, and used to pace backwards and forwards upon it, and amuse himself with shooting with a pistol at a door. It was here that she last saw him, with the exception of a dinner-visit, after his return from his travels. It was here that he took his last leave of Mary Chaworth, when

‘ He went his way,
And ne’er repassed that hoary threshold more.’

“ It was here, then, those ill-fated ones stood, and lingered, and conversed, for at least two hours. Mary Chaworth was here all life and spirit, full of youth, and beauty, and hope. What a change fell upon her after life ! She now stood here, the last scion of a time-honored race, with large possessions, with the fond belief of sharing them in joy with the chosen of her life. Never did human life present a sadder contrast ! There are many reasons why we should draw a veil over this mournful history, much of which will never be known ; suffice it to say, that it was not without most real, deep, and agonizing causes, that years after,

‘ In her home, her native home,
She dwelt begirt with growing infancy,
Daughters and sons of beauty, — but behold !
Upon her face there was the tint of grief,
The settled shadow of an inward strife,
And an unquiet drooping of the eye,
As if its lid was charged with unshed tears.

“It was not without a fearful outraging of trusting affections, the desolation of a spirit trodden and crushed by that which should have shielded it, that

‘She was changed
As by the sickness of the soul : her mind
Had wandered from its dwelling, and her eyes
They had not their own lustre, but the look
Which is not of the earth ; she was become
The queen of a fantastic realm ; her thoughts
Were combinations of disjointed things ;
And forms impalpable and unperceived
Of others’ sight, familiar were to hers.’

“There must have come a day, a soul-prostrating day, when she must have felt the grand mistake she had made, in casting away a heart that never ceased to love her and sorrow for her, and a mind that wrapt her, even severed as it was from her, in an imperishable halo of glory.

“There is nothing in all the histories of broken affections and mortal sorrows, more striking and melancholy than the idea of this lady, so bright and joyous-hearted in her youth, sitting in her latter years, for days and weeks, alone and secluded, uninterrupted by any one, in this old house, weeping over the poems which commented in burning words on the individual fortunes of herself and Lord Byron, —

‘The one
To end in madness, — both in misery.’

“With this idea vividly impressed on our spirits, a darker shade seemed to settle down on those antiquated rooms ; — we passed out into the garden, at the door at which Byron passed ; we trod that stately terrace, and gazed at the old vase placed in the centre of its massy balustrade, bearing the original escutcheon of the Lord Chaworth, and stands a brave object as seen from the garden, into which we descended, and wandered among its high-grown evergreens. But every thing was tinged with the spirit and fate of that unhappy lady. The walks were overgrown with grass ; and tufts of snowdrop leaves, now grown wild and shaggy, as they do after the flower is over, grew in them ; and tufts of a beautiful and peculiar kind of fumitory, with its pink bloom, and the daffodils and primroses of early spring, looked out from amongst the large forest trees that surround the garden. Every thing, even the smallest, seemed in unison with that great spirit of silence and desolation which hovered over the place ; and the gusty winds that swept the long wood-walk by which we came away, gave us a most fitting adieu.” — Vol. I. pp. 364 — 375.

The second volume opens with a charming chapter upon the love of the beautiful in nature, as manifested in the literature of the ancients and of the moderns. We think the author rather underrates the perception of, and passion for, natural beauty among the ancients ; but he is certainly right in his opinion, that modern literature opens a new world of feeling and sentiment, and that the originating cause of this fact is to be found in the influence of Christianity. The chapter on the love of nature expressed by English literature as compared with that of the continental nations, is full of just and ingenious criticism ; and the remarks upon the influence of the diffusion of cheap and accurate wood engravings are true and striking.

The reader will find more novelty, probably, in the long and delightful accounts of the forests of England, one of the most remarkable features, certainly, in the aspect of that country, and closely connected with all the legendary traditions and poetry of our ancestors. While turning over the pages of these most agreeable chapters, we seem to be transported into the midst of those venerable scenes ; the tales of other years, the heroes of the fictions and ballad poetry, seem to gather around us ; and we surrender ourselves with delight to the illusion. The last division of the work is wholly occupied with the ancient festivities and still lingering customs of every part of England. Into all these, the author enters with a fulness of detail, and a familiarity of knowledge, that leave nothing to be desired. We have room only for a few paragraphs from the chapter on Christmas.

“Such are the rites, fancies, and ceremonies with which other, and especially Catholic countries, have invested this ancient festival. What now remain in our Protestant nation of these customs ? Much is gone ; many are the changes that have taken place in our manners and opinions ; and yet is it certain that we regard this season of festivity with a strong and sacred affection. It is true that there is commonly but one day of thorough holiday to the people ; one day on which all shops are shut ; on which labor in a great measure ceases, and the poor join with the rich in repose and worship. The poor, indeed, do not partake the benefit of this season, as the poor of old time did ; the houses of the great are not, as they were then, open to all tenants and dependents. There is now, indeed, upon the great man's table,

‘No mark to part the squire and lord ;’

but there is a mark more immobile than the salt, set in the grain of our minds. The distinctions of society have grown with our commercial wealth, and have multiplied grades and relations. A sense of independence too has sprung up in the lower classes, with commerce and the growth of intelligence. The great man might, indeed, condescend to call his tenants and dependents to his hall to a Christmas revel ; but, if they went at all, they would go reluctantly, and feel ill at ease. They would feel it as a condescension, and not as springing out of the heartiness of old customs. They would feel that they were out of their element ; for all classes know instinctively the broad differences of habits, manners, and modes of thinking, that separate them from each other more effectually than any feudal institutions did their ancestors. The pride of the yeoman would be more in danger of suffering than the pride of the lord ; the pride of the cottager than that of the farmer, if invited to his table. When the brick floor and the wooden bench gave way in the farm-house to the carpet and the mahogany chair, the feet of the laborer ceased to tread familiarly round the farmer's table. Harvest meals and harvest-home suppers bring them together in rustic districts ; they are the remaining links of the old chain of society ; but the Christmas custom is broken, and is therefore no longer observable with full content. This great difference between the past and present exists, and therefore the rejoicing of the poor at this time is short and small ; would to Heaven that the kindly feeling of the community would make it greater !

“ But, independent of this, to the rest of the community Christmas brings much of its ancient pleasure. Each class, within itself, enjoys it, perhaps more deeply, if less noisily than of old. It is, as I have before said, the festival of the fireside. Friends and families are brought together by many circumstances. Summer tourists and out-of-door pleasure-seekers have all turned home at the frown of winter. As it was their delight in the early year to plan excursions, to make parties, and then to fly forth in all directions, to enjoy new scenes, new faces, summer skies, and sea-breezes ; it is now their delight to assemble again round their familiar firesides, with the old familiar faces, to talk over all that they have seen, and said, and done. Parliament has adjourned, and weary senators and their families have fled from London, and are, once more, at their country-seats. Children are come home from school ; business seems to pause, or to move less urgently in the dead season of the year, and releases

numbers from its tread-mill round to an interval of relaxation. All the branches of families meet with spirits eager for enjoyment ; and storms, frosts, and darkness without, send them for that enjoyment to the fire-bright hearth.

“ Christmas-eve approaches, and with it signs of observance, and feasting, and amusement. Holly, ivy, and mistletoe appear in vast quantities in the markets, and almost every housekeeper, except those of the Society of Friends, furnishes herself with a quantity to decorate her windows, if not always to sport a kissing-bush. Churches, halls, city houses and country cottages, are all seen with their windows stuck over with sprigs of green and scarlet-berried holly. Mistletoe is said never to be introduced into churches except by ignorance of the sextons, being held in abhorrence by the early Christians on account of its prominence in the Druidical ceremonies. And this is likely enough ; but in the house it maintains its station, and well merits it, by the beauty of its divaricated branches of pale-green, and its pearly-white berries. But Christmas-eve brings not only evergreens into request, but abundance of more substantial things. The coaches to town are fairly loaded to the utmost with geese, turkeys, and game, as those downwards are with barrels of oysters. The grocers are busy selling currants, raisins, spices, and other good things, for the composition of mince-pies and Christmas sweetmeats. Pigs are killed, and pork-pies, sausages, and spareribs abound from the greatest hall to the lowest hut. Heaven be thanked that the blessing goes so far in this instance. It is a delight to think of all the little children in the poor man's house, that the year through have lived coarsely if not sparely, now watching the fat pig from their own sty cut up, and pies and spareribs, boiling pieces, black-puddings, and sausages, springing up as from a magical storehouse unlocked by the key of Old Christmas. O ! it is a delicious time, when the father and the mother can sit down amongst their throng of eager little ones, that “ feel their life in every limb,” and feast them to their hearts' content ; and live with them for a short time amid substantial things and savory smells, and, after all, hang in the chimney corner two noble flitches for the coming year.

“ These good things come with Christmas-eve, and with them come the WAITES. Except in some few very primitive districts, these do not go about for a week or more as they used to do, but merely on this night. And it is a fact singularly unfortunate for Mr. Bulwer's theory of the effect of Methodism noticed before, that wherever Methodists exist

they are sure to be amongst these waites, and are, in many places, the only ones. The strange, dreamy, yet delightful effect of the music and singing of these waites, as you hear them in a state rather of sleep than waking, who has not experienced? They are, as Fixelin expresses it, to our conscious senses, but half dormant understandings, 'sounds out of heaven, singing voices of angels in the air.' I shall never forget the delicious impressions of this midnight music on my childish spirit, and would fain hear such strains on every returning Christmas-eve till I cease to hear any mortal sounds.

"But Christmas morning comes; and ere daylight dawns, you are awake by the rejoicing music of all the village or the city bells, as it may be; and cannot help feeling, spite of all that puritans and grave denouncers of times and seasons have said, that there is something holy in the remembrance of the time which does your spirit good. Who can read these verses of Wordsworth's, addressed to his brother, without feeling the truth of this?

" ' TO THE REV. DR. WORDSWORTH.

" ' THE minstrels played their Christmas tune
To-night beneath my cottage eaves;
While, smitten by the lofty moon,
The encircling laurels, thick with leaves,
Gave back a rich and dazzling sheen,
That overpowered their natural green.

" ' Through hill and valley every breeze
Had sunk to rest with folded wings;
Keen was the air, but could not freeze
Nor check the music of their strings;
So stout and hardy were the band
That scraped the chords with strenuous hand.

" ' And who but listened? — till was paid
Respect to every inmate's claim;
The greeting given, the music played,
In honor of each household name,
Duly pronounced with lusty call,
And "merry Christmas" wished to all!

" ' O Brother! I revere the choice
That took thee from thy native hills;
And it is given thee to rejoice;
Though public care full often tills
(Heaven only witness of the toil)
A barren and ungrateful soil.

" ' Yet would that thou, with me and mine,
Hadst heard this never-failing rite;
And seen on other faces shine
A true revival of the light, —

Which Nature and these rustic Powers,
In simple childhood, spread on ours !

“ ‘ For pleasure hath not ceased to wait
On these expected, annual rounds,
Whether the rich man's sumptuous gate
Call forth the unelaborate sounds,
Or they are offered at the door
That guards the dwelling of the poor.

“ ‘ How touching, when at midnight sweep
Snow-muffled winds, and all is dark,
To hear, — and sink again to sleep !
Or, at an earlier call, to mark,
By blazing fire, the still suspense
Of self-complacent innocence.

“ ‘ The mutual nod, — the grave disguise
Of hearts with gladness brimming o'er ;
And some unbidden tears that rise
For names once heard, and heard no more :
Tears, brightened by the serenade,
For infant in the cradle laid !

“ ‘ Ah ! not for emerald fields alone,
With ambient streams more pure and bright
Than fabled Cytherea's zone
Glittering before the Thunderer's sight,
Is to my heart of hearts endeared
The ground where we were born and reared !

“ ‘ Hail ! ancient Manners ! sure defence,
Where they survive, of wholesome laws ;
Remnants of love whose modest sense
Thus into narrow room withdraws ;
Hail, Usages of pristine mould,
And ye, that guard them, Mountains old ! ’

“ ‘ Christmas-day then is come ! and with it begins a heart-felt season of social delight, and interchanges of kindred enjoyments. In large houses are large parties, music, and feasting, dancing and cards. Beautiful faces and noble forms, the most fair and accomplished of England's sons and daughters, beautify the ample fire-sides of aristocratic halls. Senators and judges, lawyers and clergymen, poets and philosophers, there meet in cheerful and even sportive ease, amid the elegancies of polished life. In more old fashioned, but substantial country abodes, old fashioned hilarity prevails. In the farm-house hearty spirits are met. Here are dancing and feasting too ; and often blindman's buff, turn-trencher, and some of the simple games of the last age remain. In all families, except the families of the poor, who seem too much forgotten at this, as at other times in this refined age, there are visits paid and received ; parties going out, or coming in ; and everywhere abound, as indispensable to the

season, mince-pies, and wishes for 'a merry Christmas and a happy New-year.' " — Vol. II. pp. 205–211.

We have only to repeat, that these volumes are among the most entertaining that have lately been published. They present a picture of England, such as cannot readily elsewhere be found ; a picture drawn by one who adds to a hearty love of his country, the eye of the poet, and the hand of the artist ; one who has a heart open to all good impressions and humane sympathies ; one whose mind is richly adorned with the elegant letters of the present, and an antiquarian knowledge of the past. If the author, while visiting and describing his favorite spots, enjoyed, as he seems to intimate, ten times as much as his reader can from his recital, we can only say, that he must have been for the time the most enviable of mortals.

ART. X. — *Airs of Palestine, and other Poems*. By JOHN PIERPONT. Boston. James Munroe & Co. 16mo. pp. 334.

THE "Airs of Palestine" have been favorably known to the literary community for many years. On a subject, — the effects of music, — often enough handled by the poets, from Pindar down to Gray, Mr. Pierpont, nothing daunted by the mighty names who have preceded him, has certainly given us one of the most pleasing poems, which yet adorn our literature. The beauty of the language, the finish of the versification, the harmony of the numbers, secure it an undisputed place among the few American classical works. Many fine descriptive passages show the poetical eye, as well as the musical ear. We welcome, therefore, this republication, which comes to us in a form well worthy of a poet's taste ; and we read its polished couplets with the more pleasure, because their equable flow contrasts pleasantly with the forced and spasmodic inspiration of the greater portion of recent English poetry, and reminds us of a more vigorous and healthy style, unhappily somewhat out of date. We are confident that the public will share our feeling, and will hail with plaudits the re-appearance of an ancient favorite in such a becoming garb.